

Sunday 22nd November (Christ the King)
Daniel 7:9-14 Psalm 93 John 18:33-37 Revelation 1:4-8

PRAY

Can anyone tell me why 4.18pm on 9th September 2015 was a significant moment in history?
The moment when Queen Elizabeth became the longest reigning UK monarch, beating the record that Queen Victoria had held until then
Today, according to that fount of all information - Wikipedia, she has been monarch for 23,300 days (63 years 9 months)
Living in 21st Century Britain we are used to a safe and stable rule
Yes, our government changes election by election and policies for education or pensions or taxes or..... change with each government but Great Britain has been Great Britain for and our monarchy is stable. We have a long established legal system and set of rules and regulations to abide by.

In other countries that is not the case
Take Southern Sudan only formed in 2011 when it broke away from Sudan and is still unstable
Or think of the people of Kosovo
In 2006 they became the state of Serbia but then in 2008, after less than 2 years, they broke away from Serbia and became their own state

The nearest to that we in the British Isles have witnessed was the vote for Scottish independence in 2014.
But even then it was a democratic process, overseen by publicised rules and regulations

For modern states such as Southern Sudan or Kosovo it is usually the power of guns or strong dictatorships that mean the boundary changes of a state or the overthrow of an old rule in place of another

This is much more akin to what it may have been like in the days of Jesus when the passage we had read from John was written

John 18

200 years before Jesus Judas Maccabaeus led a military revolution against Syria and established Independence for the Jewish people
But just 30 years before Jesus things changed because Herod the Great defeated the empire to the East and Rome 'allowed him' then to become ruler and 'King of the Jews'

People of strong military power, persuasive tactics, with a new set of rules that had to be obeyed (including paying taxes to Caesar hence people like Zacchaeus that we heard about on Tuesday had a job) took over the ruling of nations

After Herod Caesar became king
With each new ruler, each new king there were new rules to be obeyed, new powers to submit to, new expectations for how to live and correspondingly new punishments for breaking the rules

And so Pilate is presented with Jesus. Who had been labelled 'King of the Jews'
Pilate was Roman and unfamiliar with Jewish customs BUT he understood the concept of kingship
and was not about to let a new upstart try and take over leadership of HIS state.
But in many ways Jesus did not present as much of a threat
He was not exactly wealthy. He came from the wrong part of the country And he had only a small
number of followers and they all seemed to have deserted him

So I guess that Pilate was not feeling too threatened by the man before him - Jesus of Nazareth
but hailed as King of the Jews by some. Pilate may even have thought that Jesus was deluded, so
crazy was the concept of him being a king to someone like Pilate.

Once Jesus is given the chance to respond to the accusation He does so with all His usual
calmness and wisdom
'My Kingdom is not from this world' Jesus replies to Pilates questions John 18:36
You see Jesus knew He was Christ the King
But He also knew that His value base was different to that of worldly kings and state leaders
He spoke of different rules and ways of living, sometimes completely opposite to those of the state
leaders and even the religious leaders.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and love your neighbour as yourself
Become like little children or you will not enter the Kingdom - God's Kingdom PAUSE

Jesus the carpenters son from Nazareth born to a young virgin mother who walked about
with a small group of friends healing and teaching and calming raging seas and who ended
up before Pilate with the accusation of being 'King of the Jews' was exactly that
Christ the King

Daniel

He was here on earth to fulfil the prophetic vision that Daniel had had hundreds of years earlier
The vision of one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven
Being presented to the Ancient One Yahweh
Who was pure and formidable and cleansing
The one like a human being who was being given everlasting dominion and rule
Rule over an everlasting dominion one that shall not pass away
In Daniel's vision he saw that this kingship would never be destroyed
And that all peoples and nations and languages would serve him

Phil 2:9-10

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Revelation

And as the vision that John records in Revelation tells us
this King, Jesus Christ, doesn't just ask that we love Him but He loves us
He doesn't just want us to serve Him but served us by providing the means to set us free from our
sins
He doesn't just reign for 23,300 days but for ever and ever

He is the beginning and the end
The one who was and is and is to come

Application

'So are you a king?' Pilate asked Jesus
'You say that I am a king' replied Jesus

What do you say if I ask you that question?
Is Jesus Christ the King?

Next Sunday is the start of Advent

The season when we prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus and remind ourselves that He has
promised to come again and we should prepare and be ready
So is Jesus the one whose birth we will soon be celebrating the King? The one whose dominion is
an everlasting dominion
Is He your King?

Because if we say yes then we should be serving Him
We should be obeying His laws and teachings
We should be honouring Him and living our lives worthy of being His people
Not because He is a powerful dictator
But because He is holy and majestic
Because He testifies to The Truth
And because He loves us and gave His life for us so that we can be free

Today is known in the church calendar as Christ the King Sunday

We each have a choice as to whether we honour and obey Jesus Christ as our King or not
If your choice is yes then what do you need to surrender to Christ today?
Because He is a holy and trustworthy and majestic King who deserves our everything
And at whose knee we, along with everyone else shall one day bow before